

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8043
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3418

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE: CONVERSATION WITH INTERIOR
MINISTER CONNIE MULDER

REF: (A) STATE 151195; (B) DURBAN 0435

1. SUMMARY: CABINET COMMITTEE IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA'S REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE COLORED AND INDIAN POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. CONNIE MULDER, CHIEF ASPIRANT TO SUCCEED PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, RECENTLY TOLD ME THAT WHILE SOME DISAGREEMENTS EXIST WITHIN THE COMMITTEE, IT IS UNANIMOUS THAT THERE IS TO BE NO POWER SHARING IN THE SENSE OF ONE PARLIAMENT WITH REPRESENTATION BY COLOREDS AND INDIANS ON A COMMON ROLE BASIS. MULDER FRANKLY SAID THAT ANY SUCH EQUAL REPRESENTATION SCHEME WAS UNACCEPTABLE AS IT WOULD COST THE NP ITS MAJORITY. INSTEAD, HE SAID, A CONSENSUS IS EMERGING ON A SEPARATE PARLIAMENT FOR EACH OF THE THREE POPULATION GROUPS. MULDER ALSO SPOKE OF THE POSSIBILITY
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OF A JOINT BODY WHICH MIGHT SERVE AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION AND COORDINATION. HE DECLINED TO ELABORATE ON THE DETAILS OF HOW THIS SYSTEM MIGHT WORK. HE DID, HOWEVER, OUTLINE THE MECHANICS THROUGH WHICH THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND IDEAS WOULD BE CONSIDERED AND THE DECISION DISCUSSED WITH THE GROUPS CONCERNED AND THE NP PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AN EFFORT TO GIVE THE DEPARTMENT A MORE ADEQUATE PICTURE OF WHAT IS GOING ON WITHIN THE UPPER ECHELONS OF AFRIKANERDOM ON THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL CHANGE, THE EMBASSY OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WILL BE REPORTING THE VIEWS OF PRINCIPAL PLAYERS IN THIS DRAMA. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL (B) AND PREVIOUS MESSAGES, WE EXPECT THE PLAY TO UNFOLD IN TERMS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON MODIFICATION OF THE WESTMINSTER SYSTEM, WHICH ARE TO BE DEBATED IN THE CABINET IN EARLY AUGUST AND CONSULTED AT THE NATIONAL PARTY PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES IN LATE AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER.

3. ONE OF THE KEY MEMBERS OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE IS CONNIE MULDER, HEAD OF THE TRANSVAAL SECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARTY AND AT THIS STAGE CHIEF ASPIRANT TO SUCCEED PRIME MINISTER VORSTER. AT MY INITIATIVE, I CALLED ON MULDER ON JULY 7. HE KNEW IN ADVANCE THAT MY PURPOSE WAS TO TALK ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND HE WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY.

4. AFTER MAKING ALL THE EXPECTED CAVEATS ABOUT PERSONAL AS AGAINST OFFICIAL VIEWS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND TENTATIVENESS OF WHAT HE HAD TO SAY, MULDER LIFTED THE VEIL ON THE STATUS OF WORK OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE SUFFICIENTLY TO GET A FAIRLY GOOD IDEA OF THE DRIFT OF CURRENT THINKING ON SUBSTANCE AND MECHANICS. MULDER MAINTAINED THAT THE COMMITTEE IS STILL WORKING ON ITS MANDATE BUT EXPECTS TO HAVE ITS "RECOMMENDATIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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OR ALTERNATIVE IDEAS" READY FOR DISCUSSION BY THE CABINET WHEN IT RESUMES ITS SESSIONS IN EARLY AUGUST. SO FAR, ACCORDING TO MULDER, THERE IS AGREEMENT ON ONLY ONE ISSUE: THERE IS TO BE NO POWER SHARING IN THE SENSE OF ONE PARLIAMENT WITH REPRESENTATION BY INDIANS AND COLOREDS ON A COMMON ROLE BASIS. NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED, BUT THERE IS AN EMERGING CONSENSUS ON EACH OF THE THREE POPULATION GROUPS HAVING THEIR OWN PARLIAMENT WITH PRESCRIBED AREAS IN WHICH EACH CAN LEGISLATE. HE DECLINED TO ELABORATE ON THIS, ALTHOUGH IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION ABOUT WHO WOULD DIVIDE UP THE NATIONAL PIE, HE NOTED THAT EACH PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAX ITS PEOPLE, WITH THE WHITE PARLIAMENT HAVING TO SUPPLEMENT THE REVENUE WHICH THE INDIAN AND COLORED PARLIAMENTS MIGHT RAISE.

5. BEYOND THE PARLIAMENTS, MULDER SAID THE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AT THIS STAGE ARE LESS CLEARLY DEFINED. HE SPOKE OF A BODY MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THREE PARLIAMENTS WHICH MIGHT SERVE AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION AND COORDINATION OF MEASURES INVOLVING ALL THREE PARLIAMENTS. HE NOTED THAT SUCH A BODY ALREADY EXISTED IN THE CABINET COUNCIL WHICH PM VORSTER PERIODICALLY CONVENES TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST. MULDER WAS SUGGESTING THAT THE POWERS OF THIS GROUP MIGHT BE

MADE MORE SPECIFIC TO CORRESPOND WITH THE LEGISLATIVE AREAS
ASSIGNED TO THE INDIAN AND COLORED PARLIAMENTS. HE DECLINED
TO BE DRAWN INTO ANY FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THIS ASPECT,
SAYING THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES UNDER
CONSIDERATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 3418

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6. NOTING PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT ESTABLISHMENT OF A
STRONG EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT, I ASKED MULDER WHETHER ANY
MAJOR CHANGES ARE CONTEMPLATED IN THIS AREA. HE REPLIED
THAT IN SPITE OF THE BOER REPUBLIC TRADITION OF
DOMINATING PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP, THEY HAD FOUND THE
WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM TO HAVE WORKED WELL
ENOUGH. FURTHERMORE, IT IS ADVISABLE TO RETAIN A LARGELY
CEREMONIAL STATE PRESIDENT WHO COULD ACT AS HEAD OF
STATE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE AND THUS SERVE AS A NON-
PARTISAN BRIDGE BETWEEN ALL THE POPULATION GROUPS,
A ROLE WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER AS PARTY LEADER
AND HEAD OF THE WHITE PARLIAMENT COULD NOT PLAY.

7. TURNING TO THE BLACK POPULATION, I ASKED WHAT PLANS
THE CABINET COMMITTEE HAD FOR THEM. MULDER REPLIED
THAT THEY DO NOT FALL UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE.
NO CHANGE IS CONTEMPLATED IN THE THRUST OF NATIONAL
PARTY POLICY WITH REGARD TO BLACKS. THEY MUST FIND THEIR
POLITICAL FULFILLMENT VIA INDEPENDENT STATES OR SELF-

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GOVERNING HOMELANDS. CONSOLIDATION OF HOMELANDS WOULD HAVE TO MOVE APACE, TOGETHER WITH THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BLACK TOWNSHIPS WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN ATUONOMY OVER THEIR LOCAL AFFAIRS AS CONTEMPLATED IN THE COMMUNITY COUNCILS BILL APPROVED BY THE PARLIAMENT BEFORE ADJOURNMENT. BUT BLACKS LIVING IN URBAN AREAS WOULD STILL BE LINKED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE HOMELAND AND SEEK POLITICAL EXPRESSION THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONS OF THEIR HOMELAND.

8. WITH REGARD TO THE MECHANICS FOR CONSULTING THE RANK AND FILE ON SUCH MEASURES AS THE GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO SPONSOR, MULDER PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:

A. CABINET COMMITTEE HOPES TO COMPLETE ITS WORK BY THE END OF JULY.

B. WHEN CABINET RESUMES REGULAR SESSIONS IN AUGUST, IT WILL REVIEW AND DECIDE WHICH MEASURES TO TAKE TO NP CONGRESSES.

C. BEFORE GOING TO THE CONGRESSES, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSULT WITH THE INDIAN AND COLORED COUNCILS IN AN EFFORT TO WIN THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE MEASURES CONTEMPLATED. IN THE CASE OF THE COLORED REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, THE CONSULTATION IS TO BE CARRIED OUT SEPARATELY WITH THE LABOR AND FEDERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP.

D. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL PERSONALLY PRESENT THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS AT EACH OF THE PROVINCIAL NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESSES BEGINNING WITH THE CAPE CONGRESS ON AUGUST 22 AND RUNNING THROUGH THE OTHER PROVINCIAL BODIES AS FOLLOWS:
NATAL - AUG. 30-SEPT. 1, ORANGE FREE STATE - SEPT 7-8,
TRANSVAAL - SEPT. 13-14.

E. ASSUMING GENERAL RANK AND FILE SUPPORT, THE GOVERNMENT

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WILL PRESENT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO PARLIAMENT NEXT JANUARY.

9. COMMENT: JULDER MADE NO EFFORT TO HIDE THE FACT THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE CABINET COMMITTEE AND THE CABINET ON THE CHANGES TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE WEST-MINSTER SYSTEM TO ACCOMMODATE INDIANS AND COLOREDS. HE CAUTIONED AGAINST EXAGGERATING THESE DIFFERENCES AS REFLECTED IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS. MULDER MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO ANY ONE-MAN

ONE-VOTE, COMMON ROLE APPROACH TO POWER SHARING. THE MATHEMATICS OF SUCH AN APPROACH (WHICH HE REVIEWED IN DETAIL) WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE NATIONAL PARTY MAJORITY, WHICH HE FRANKLY STATED WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. MULDER ESTIMATED THE VERLIGTE COMPONENT OF NATIONAL PARTY SUPPORTERS TO BE NO HIGHER THAN 20 PERCENT AND PROBABLY CLOSER TO 15 PERCENT. HE SAID THAT AS A PRACTICAL POLITICIAN, THE GROUP WHICH INTERESTED HIM WAS THE 80 PERCENT. MULDER MADE ONE OTHER INTERESTING OBSERVATION. SPEAKING OF VORSTER AND THE COPE OF LIKELY CHANGE, HE NOTED THAT VORSTER HAD TAKEN VERY CONSERVATIVE PUBLIC POSITIONS OVER THE YEARS AND IT WAS TOO MUCH TO EXPECT HIM TO ABANDON THESE STANDS. ANOTHER PRIME MINISTER MIGHT BE WILLING TO GO FURTHER, MULDER COMMENTED, BUT ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT RADICAL DEPARTURES FROM VORSTER. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION MULDER WAS CAREFUL NOT TO SHOW WHERE HE STOOD PERSONALLY ON HOW MUCH POWER SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE INDIAN AND COLORED PARLIAMENTS AND THE NATURE OF POWERS OF THE GROUP WHICH WOULD OPEN THE THREE PARLIAMENTS. HE LOOKS AT THE ISSUES PRAGMATICALLY AND WILL GO WHERE HE THINKS THE VOTES ARE; IN THIS CASE, NOT TOO FAR OFF THE WELL-TROD SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT PATH.

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